1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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Recently these two bodies of young men performing respectively the star-dance and the war-dance have supplanted entirely the older, more numerous age-companies. In late years they have taken the place of the age-companies in the ceremonies connected with the erection of the sun-dance lodge. There was then considerable rivalry between them, and it is said that a member of either company who should take part with the other would be abused by his companions, and perhaps have his clothes torn. Recently also the two groups have had certain social functions, which among most Plains tribes are in the hands of tribal bodies or societies. They had charge of the moving of the camp-circle and of locating it. If a man disapproved of their selection, or pitched his tent elsewhere than they directed, they overturned it, and perhaps destroyed his property or killed his horses. If buffalo were seen and others than themselves went ahead and killed them, these two companies cut both the meat and the skin of such game into small pieces.

The Fly-Dance.

The fly-dance (nouba^{n}w^{n}), the first of the dances, seems to have been regarded in some ways as preliminary to the series, rather than part of it, somewhat like the Arapaho kit-fox and star dances. The dancers were called noubän ("flies"). They were young men, sometimes described as boys. Apparently they were of an age where many or all of them were still unmarried, for no mention of their wives participating in the ceremony is made. The duration of the dance is not quite sure. It is said, like all the other ceremonies, to have continued four days; but another informant gave one day as the length of the ceremony. It is not clear whether or not a lodge was erected for the ceremony. In any case, however, the dance was performed outside of the camp-circle. A prominent feature seems to have been the food cooked by the relatives of the young dancers, and brought to the dancing-place. In distinction from what occurred in the other dances, "grandfathers" were secured very easily for this ceremony, which goes to show the light regard in which it was held by the elder men. The old men of the tribe are said to have gone out to the dancing-place, and, on being selected by groups of dancers as "grandfathers," to have accepted at once.

The dancing went on during the day. The dancers were practically naked; and their entire body, as customary in Arapaho and Gros Ventre ceremonies, was painted over. A common style of painting, or perhaps the characteristic one of the dance, was red, with a white stripe on the face and another on the belly. The pledger of the dance (yenouhuxtj^{i}; Arapaho, yanahut^{i}) was painted yellow, with corresponding black stripes. After the

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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561 Turn Toes (b. 1860) was one with 30 or 40 other young men who, in a group known as Calves (of leg) joined the Wolf-men about 1877. Turn Toes was certain that "Having-the-breast-of-a-woman-as-pillow" and "Holding-onto-dog's-tail" were companies which had joined the Stars. According to Turn Toes' account, when his company, the Calves, joined the Wolf-men, four men from the company which had just preceded them in entry were asked by the present company to act as "elder brothers." These four considered themselves honored to instruct the new company before they would appear publicly at the next Wolf-men's dance. Lame Bull had been one of the four so selected from among the Potbellies to initiate the next incoming Star group, but we failed to obtain the name of that company.

It apparently was permissible, either before or after the company was so initiated into the society, that any one of its members could vow the least important and simplest of the Sacred Dances, namely, the Fly Dance. When a member of the company so vowed, all the members of that company, and they alone, went through the ceremony, after which they were eligible as "soldiers," [12] i.e., when one of their number subsequently vowed any of the other Sacred Dances in the regular series, the company not only participated but also was in complete charge for the duration of the ceremony and had the authority to enforce whatever "laws" might be enacted. Inasmuch as the Sacrifice Dance was outside the regular [625] series, if that Dance were vowed, the members of the vower's company could participate if they wished, but in any case those not actually dancing acted as police.

561 An hypothesis which reconciles Kroeber's and our own data on the companies and age societies is the following. All or most of 575 the young men of the whole tribe, between the ages of 16 and 19, formed a company which met informally for some time before it joined either the Stars or the Wolf-men, and, after having gone through the Fly Dance, acted as police force during the Sacred Dances vowed by any of their number. When not participating in a Sacred Dance, the members joined in the purely social activi-

[12] Kroeber, 1908, p. 229, "The members of the age-societies are called beniinen, commonly translated at the present day as 'soldiers,' etymologically probably 'all-men,' or 'all-(?)-men.'"

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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688 be held, runners were sent by the company of the vower and all were obliged to attend. If, in preparation for the Dance, the vower and the members of his company made a ruling, for example that a hunt was necessary, this would be announced. It would be stated that no one should go out alone to kill buffalo because they wanted everybody to kill some, and it was added: 'This is the order of the Wolves (or Stars). If anyone disobeys this rule, the Wolves (or Stars) will attend to them!' Should anyone have disobeyed the order, when they all returned from the hunt it would be announced: 'So-and-so disobeyed our rule.' The company of the vower would then go in a body to the delinquent's lodge, singing a special song.[24] The people would know that someone was going to be raided and all would go out to see who the culprit might have been." The delinquent knew that if he showed anger and resisted, he was in danger of being hurt or even killed. The company confiscated the culprit's meat, taking all of it that was there, and in addition would usually tear up his lodge. Should the delinquent have an enemy-friend among the "soldiers," that one took the lead in punishing and might even go so far as to cut the ears off of the delinquent's finest horse—a deep humiliation for its owner.

688 625 Thus during a Sacred Dance, from the time the vow was publicly announced until the Dance was over, the company of the vower was in complete authority and could apply sanctions of force if the various rulings were not obeyed. They actually constituted a police for the duration of the Dance. As soon as the Dance was over, however, the vower's company had no further power and the police function inherent in the soldier societies apparently remained in abeyance until some other Sacred Dance was performed.

688 625 224 There is some little question as to whether or not attendance of all bands was compulsory at the first spring hunt for buffalo and, if so, whether the Star and Wolf societies exercised their authority at this time. On one occasion in 1939, one informant, speaking in general terms, stated that the chief of the tribe had the possibility of calling on either the Stars or the Wolves to punish an offender who hunted alone after it had been announced that the buffalo had been sighted and all were to hunt together; and on another

[24] Song recorded as No. 103.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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occasion he stated that it was the "law" of the spring hunt that no one should hunt buffalo alone or in a small group, violation of which invoked the sanctions applied by the Wolf-men or Stars. However, in 1940, this same informant stated twice, explicitly, that there was no police power except at the Sacred Dances and on a third occasion in that year said: "After the Sacred Dance the company disbanded, and the chief resumed control, but he did not punish anybody for hunting buffalo alone." 224 688 625

In any case, authority was delegated to the companies only temporarily. Otherwise there was no agency beyond that of the family which could apply sanctions of force, and then, on only two counts. A husband had the right to take the life of an unfaithful wife; the family had the right of blood revenge in case of murder. In both, however, less extreme modes of behavior were approved and bloodshed could honorably be avoided. 688 625 684 682

When murder occurred, if the family of the murdered person could be persuaded to accept a payment of goods as restitution, further spilling of blood was prevented. It was said that the lodge of the band chief offered temporary refuge to a murderer and that sanctuary was likewise available in the lodge of the Keeper either of the Flat or of the Feathered Pipe. It was thought that if the murderer and his family, who collectively shared responsibility for the crime, could flee the scene, time would be gained for negotiating the blood-price. If one blood relative killed another, there was no retaliation, but the murderer was shunned. 682 [678] [672]

While there was a considerable amount of fighting and quarreling among the Gros Ventres, especially under the influence of liquor, disputes were usually settled without bloodshed. Outright murder, as distinct from deaths attributed to witchcraft, was seemingly relatively infrequent. The following seven cases, arranged chronologically, illustrate actual behavior. Each of these was referred to independently by several different informants with a high level of agreement among them on details. The total represents all the murders that were known to have occurred in the period from about 1850 to 1885. 689

Case No. 1. These events took place about 1847. Two young men, who were related by blood, went on foot to steal horses from the enemy. One had obtained a fine horse, but the other had been 682

7: Flannery E-5 (1940, 1945) 1947
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

796 Such was the form of the Grass dance as carried out by the Gros Ventres from the time of its adoption from the Assiniboine up to about 1890 when changes began creeping in.

The Form: Later Period

796 178 It should perhaps be emphasized at this point that the changes which characterized the Grass dance after 1890 were mostly in the nature of accretions around the nucleus as originally adopted, so that, although in 1901 the form of the Grass dance differed somewhat from the earlier form, as Kroeber noted,[13] the whole was still distinctly recognizable as an expansion thereof.

Changes in personnel and equipment. At the turn of the century participation in the Grass dance was no longer restricted to members of a particular society. Everybody was free to join in. The Grass dance was, however, in charge of four officials, the "chiefs" who sat in the place of honor opposite the door and presided over the ceremony (Fig. 1). They were consulted on any matters pertaining to the performance, made rules, sometimes arbitrarily, during the dance, and were custodians of any fines collected. They were responsible for seeing to it that provisions were on hand when a dance was to be held. There were, moreover, two women officials, whose rank was said to be equal to that of the "chiefs" and whose insignia were ceremonial dresses of black cloth. These two sat to the right of the four chiefs.

[625] The orders of the "chiefs" were enforced by two men who sat, one on either side of the door, holding whips with ornamental handles. These whips were apparently a simple substitution for the wands representing swords in the original Grass dance. The whip owners each had an assistant who ran errands and attended to getting water, keeping up the fire and so on. An entirely new feature was, however, the addition of two women who owned whips and their two female assistants. They likewise sat on each side of the door but behind the men. When it was time for the women to dance,—another innovation to which we shall refer later,—the women whip owners rose and danced in opposite di-

[13] Kroeber, A. L., Ethnology of the Gros Ventre, AMNH-AP 1, pt. 4, 1908, p. 238.

7: Flannery E-5 (1940, 1945) 1947
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

were supposed to come prepared with pipe, tobacco, and matches in anticipation of this song. If, for some reason, one of the four was unable to furnish at least a pipeful of mixture, and could not borrow one, he was immediately arrested by the owners of the whips and punished by the singers who might tear his shirt at the neck so everyone could see it, or, perhaps, pour over him a good cupful of broth made from dog flesh. This broth has a strong and lasting odor. The female officers were likewise expected to give the women singers a smoke. The smoking song marked an intermission. No one danced to this song and all sat around smoking and taking it easy.

If things got too dull, however, one of the owners of the whips might get up, call the announcer, and say: "Tell my friends that I am going to whip them if they don't dance. I will have the right to whip them because I am going to pay for it," and he would present a bridle, or perhaps five dollars, or something of that order of magnitude, to anyone he wished. It was understood, then, that the next time the singing started this man might hit any person,—even one of the "chiefs,"—who failed to dance.

Another feature reminiscent of the original Grass dance but showing some slight change, was the provision that anyone who wished might have it announced that he was going to "lock the door," which meant that nobody could go home until the dance was over. For doing this however he had to provide all the necessary food for another Grass dance to be held on the night immediately following. It was up to the owners of the whips to enforce the regulation by taking something valuable, say a hat or a blanket, from anyone who left the dance and the article was forfeit if he failed to return.

Based on the same concept, the practice grew up of forcing attendance in the following way. Once in a while the owners of the whips might order their assistants to go from door to door in the whole community and take something belonging to each householder, say a bridle, or a valuable belt, or a gun, and bring it to the dancing-place. If the owner of the object were not at the dance, his property was returned to him only if he promised

7: Flannery E-5 (1940, 1945) 1947
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796 575 preliminary to the series of Sacred Dances, namely the Fly Dance. After this ceremony was over he was eligible as a "soldier." That is, should one of the members of his "company" vow to give any one of the Sacred Dances in the series, he and other members of the society to which he belonged—either Wolf or Star—would act as police for the time during which the Dance was being held. Thus it was that Stars might police the hunt [625] and keep order in the camp circle during one such Sacred Dance while Wolves might perform the same duties at another time, depending on which moiety the vower belonged to.

When not engaged as soldiers in connection with one of the Dances, the two societies exhibited the keenest rivalry, particularly in war-deeds, but also in gambling, in foot-racing, and whenever else opportunity offered. One aspect of this rivalry was apparent when each put on its own dance. The general procedure of both was identical but there were a few distinctive features. When the whole tribe was together and there was no serious threat of war, one society or the other would decide the time was ripe to hold its dance. Let us assume that the Star society had so decided.

The members of the Star society would then don their best clothes and, mounted on their finest horses, go around the camp circle accompanied by two especially prominent members who had counted coup against the enemy while on horseback. They would [533] sing special begging songs in front of the lodges of several well-to-do members of the opposite society. It was a challenge to the Wolf-men and they usually responded in the accepted fashion by giving large quantities of food, in which their relatives would help them out. This would provide the feast at the dance. The Stars then proceeded to the opening of the camp circle and all dismounting except the two very prominent warriors, formed in a line by twos, the four singers with their hand drums last. To the accompaniment of a marching song the line moved "snake-dance" fashion weaving back and forth, to the dancing lodge which had been erected in the center of the camp circle. At the entrance to the lodge the line divided, some going to the right,